Labour Monthly

A Magazine of International Labour

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

6d

THE SOVIET ANNIVERSARY

by D. N. PRITT, K.C., M.P.

MOLOTOV'S FINAL SPEECH AT PARIS

WHY HOUSING IS SLOW *by Jack Ryan*

OTHER ARTICLES AND BOOK REVIEWS

November, 1946

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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Beginning in January, 1947, a changed LABOUR MONTHLY corresponding to peace-time conditions will be produced. It will not as yet be back to the palmy days of pre-war conditions, when paper was cheap, readily available, not subject to Government restrictions; but it will be the best possible to meet our own and our readers' desires. It will be altered in appearance and readability; and improved in contents.

It will be a NEW Labour Monthly

From January, 1947, home readers of the LABOUR MONTHLY will receive their copies printed on

WHITE PAPER

The magazine will be printed henceforward in a much

BIGGER TYPE

nd set right across the page for articles, while reviews, c., will be in two columns as before, but in a larger type lan at present.

Lastly, the page itself, now crown-octavo, will be in

LARGER SIZE

By this means the contents will not only be made more sy to read, but LABOUR MONTHLY readers will be given a igazine nearly one-third larger in size. For though in the ginal calculations it was found that the type surface in 4-page magazine of larger size would be equal to rather re than the present type surface, the Editorial Board ided to maintain the number of pages at 32 in the new my octavo) size.

We are sure readers will agree with us in the need to away from the blue paper and will welcome the addi- al size and the other changes. But at the same time se changes inevitably raise the question of cost: and we pose to put squarely before our readers the reasons / these alterations entail a consequent unavoidable

INCREASE IN PRICE TO ONE SHILLING.

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Under the paper control, all journals were early in the war restricted to *one-sixth* of their pre-war consumption of paper. But the circulation of this magazine had been leaping upwards in 1939 and 1940 and especially in 1941. Consequently, the only way to keep even a part of our actual and potential readers was to diminish in each copy the weight of paper consumed. Therefore, first, the number of pages was reduced to 32; then, in 1942, the size of page was cut down to the present crown octavo and type sizes reduced correspondingly; lastly, in 1943, we began to use an exceptionally light paper (air-mail) which was opaque in blue but not in any other available colour.

By these means, as repugnant to us as to many of our readers, we made the magazine available to thousands who would otherwise not have seen it.

We believe that our readers have been wholeheartedly with us in this policy. But, together with keeping the published price down to sixpence, it resulted in a deficit which required all the help given by the readers' Guarantee Fund.

Now, however, with the change to peace-time, we have to face the post-war costs and higher charges (which already had brought a steep rise in our monthly deficit) and accordingly we have to make the price such as will establish the LABOUR MONTHLY on a sound basis.

We know that this rise in price does inevitably involve a strain on earnings reduced from war-time levels. But it has been rendered necessary by the general rise in costs as well as by the new improvements in the magazine.

We are confident that our readers will continue their support and appreciate the improvements thus made possible.

EDITORIAL BOARD

NOTE.

N.B. Existing subscriptions will not be affected by this. But all new subscribers (or renewed subscriptions) will in future be given a special rate—details of which will be announced in the December issue.

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

THE THIRTIETH YEAR

We are living in happy times when the prophecy of the great socialists is beginning to be realised.

—LENIN, *speech on the unveiling of a memorial to Marx and Engels on November 7, 1918.*

LENIN spoke these words on the first anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. Famine and economic chaos held Russia in its grip. British, French, German, American and Japanese troops occupied Russian soil in support of the subsidised plundering White counter-revolutionary armies. Europe was prostrate from four years of war which had killed ten million soldiers and brought the deaths of thirty million civilians from shortage and disease. The frenzy of victor imperialism which was to reach its crazy climax at Versailles was at its height. Yet Lenin could speak of "happy times." And Lenin was right —as every one can see today. For the great overmastering reality of that moment of human history was not the immeasurable horror and suffering of the death-agony of the old world. It was the birth of the new world—the first victory of socialism which would finally conquer and end the horror. How much more can we speak of "happy times" today.

Thirtieth Year

Twenty-nine years have passed since the Soviet Revolution. We are now entering the thirtieth year of the world change from the old society to the new which was opened by the victory of the working-class in Russia in 1917. The accelerating advance of these thirty years has today reached a height which needs no underlining. The triumph of socialist construction has transformed the old ramshackle poverty-stricken Tsarist Russia to the front rank of world powers. In the test of war the first Socialist State not only repelled the assault of the most formidable offensive military machine the world has known, but played the main part in destroying the military power of fascism and saving the world. In the face of destruction without parallel in the record of any State the speed of recovery, reconstruction and audacious new advance is revealing afresh the limitless creative power of a socialist society. In international affairs the Soviet Union no longer stands alone among States as in the inter-war years. Not only the working people of all countries, but new States, new peoples' democracies, which have dealt with their landlords and big capital, fight by its side against the pressure of the representatives of the old world of monopolist wealth and privilege and racial oppression. Communism on a world scale has reached the highest level of strength in its history. No wonder reaction sounds the alarm, feels for new weapons and dreams frenzied dreams of new war.

Wolves on the Prowl

The fight is not ended. The wolves of reaction are still on the prowl. For these three decades mankind has been dragged through the depths of torment and agony, the fires of civilisation have burned low, as the bandits of the old world have sought to stem the tide of history and drown the advance of the peoples in blood. It might have been thought that this fury had reached its uttermost climax in fascism. But the downfall of fascism has not yet finally taught the lesson. The original

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inspirers and backers of fascism, now its successors and heirs, painfully collect the shattered fragments and seek to build anew the bloodstained front. Hence the present moment can be no moment for idle celebration, but calls for renewed vigilance and strengthened political activity to maintain the gains won and carry forward the advance.

Goering, Churchill and Smuts

Adversity makes strange bedfellows. Goering's final testament is trumpeted in a last interview through the Anglo-American press, praising the American monopoly of the atom bomb as the supreme weapon against Bolshevism. Churchill and Smuts don the fallen mantle of the Anti-Comintern Pact and proclaim the threadbare gospel of Pan-Europe with a strong Germany at its centre as the grand bulwark of the West against Bolshevism. Churchill praises Bevin for carrying out his policy. Smuts claims that "his (Churchill's) vision is very widely shared even by those in high authority who are, however, restrained by their responsibility from speaking out of turn or prematurely." Byrnes and Bevin proclaim their complaints against the Soviet Union. Anti-Soviet propaganda and downright lies (the rockets scare, Goebbels's "iron curtain," etc.) are spread through the Anglo-American press with an organised intensity recalling the years after the last war. The acquittal of von Papen and Schacht by the Western judges sounds the all-clear to the Junkers and trust magnates, the real architects of Nazism, just as the evasion of Goering by the complicity or neglect of his American guards creates the flimsy basis for a new Nazi myth. American big capital prepares fusion with the chief German monopolies which created Nazism. The democratic settlement of Germany is crippled and distorted by the new manoeuvres. The air of peacemaking is poisoned by the din of the new warmakers.

"You Cannot Indict Industrialists"

As in 1918, so today, Germany is still the central crux and battleground for the future of the world situation—for the victory of democracy or reaction, of peace or war. The same Anglo-American big business influences which after the last war rebuilt German reaction and prepared the way for Hitler are at work again today. According to the testimony of Captain C. M. Gilbert, United States psychiatrist attached to the Nuremberg prisoners (*Sunday Express*, October 19, 1946):—

> Schacht laughed in his cell at the suggestion that German industrialists were to be indicted for rearming Germany.
>
> "If you want to indict industrialists who helped Germany to rearm, you will have to indict your own, too," he said. "The Opel works, which did nothing but war production, were owned by General Motors. . . . You cannot indict industrialists."

Anglo-American Capital and Germany

The plans for fusion of the British and American zones in Germany are understood to include plans for linking up Anglo-American, predominantly American monopoly capital with German monopoly capital. The *New Statesman and Nation* (October 19, 1946) reports:—

> The merger of the British and American zones is already taking place, and it has been stressed that one objective of this merger is to reduce our financial commitments. This can only be done on the assumption that American Big Business is encouraged to obtain controlling interests in German industry, and the German trusts are reconstructed on American credit. If, for instance, General Motors buys up the *Volkswagen* factory, United Steel obtains a controlling interest in the *Vereinigte Stahlwerke*, and Dupont in *I.G. Farben*, then, it is thought, a reduction in the costs of a joint Anglo-American control can be secured.

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This, no doubt, is what Mr. Byrnes means when he states his determination to "rebuild democracy" in Germany.

And the Conservative press gleefully announces that the coming New York sessions will see the opening of the grand Battle of Germany, when Byrnes and Bevin will deliver their offensive against Potsdam and the whole post-war settlement of Germany, to repudiate Potsdam, cut reparations and prepare the way for rebuilding German monopolist reaction with the backing of Anglo-American capital. All, of course, in the name of the "higher spiritual values" and "respect for personality" of "Western civilisation."

Which Way?

Thus the thirtieth year opens in an atmosphere darkened by storm-clouds and the menace of new conflicts. Once again the choice opens before the peoples. But 1946 is no longer 1918. Nor is it 1938. The whole balance of forces is profoundly changed. Britain is no longer the direct leader of the open wars of intervention, nor the signatory of Munich, but is still the formal ally of the Soviet Union, even though the terms of that alliance are at present not being fulfilled. The four leading Powers, Britain, the United States, France and the Soviet Union hold joint responsibility for maintaining peace and world co-operation; and the experience of the Paris Conference has confirmed even to the doubters the imperative necessity of that Four Power leadership as the only alternative to chaos.

Wallace and Stalin

Wallace's speech and letter and Stalin's press interview have aroused responsible opinion in all countries to the seriousness of the issues, exposed the warmakers and shown the plain common-sense path of international co-operation. Unfortunately there is no statesman of corresponding calibre to speak for Britain; but the debates at the Trades Union Congress may certainly be expected to show that progressive opinion here also is aroused over the dangers of the Byrnes-Bevin policy of bellicose anti-Soviet provocation and armed backing of reaction all over the world. The myth, so sedulously spread by the millionaire-controlled press of Britain and America, that criticism of the Byrnes-Bevin policy is only "Soviet hallucination" and "Russian trouble-making" was exploded into thin air when the same criticism was voiced by the former Vice-President of Roosevelt's administration and recognised successor and champion of Roosevelt's policies today, and backed by Sumner Welles, Ickes and others. Both Wallace's and Stalin's statements showed the path to international co-operation and British-American-Soviet understanding. But with a distinction. Stalin could speak for the Government of the Soviet Union. Wallace, for his statement, was thrown out of the Government of the United States. The issue is thus squarely placed before the peoples of The United States and Britain.

Roosevelt's Memory

Roosevelt is at the present moment being given a public memorial in London, to cover up in the usual fashion the betrayal of the policies for which he fought. It would be a better memorial if a return were made to his policies, which are very clearly restated in Wallace's letter of July. It is increasingly evident—and all the recent memoirs appearing, especially the very intimate memoirs of his conversations by his son bear it out—that in the closing stages of his life, in the period of the Teheran and Crimea meetings with Stalin, Roosevelt reached, almost alone among the statesmen of the Western world, a clear perception of the basically new international situation arising from the war and the consequences for international policy if peace were to be

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maintained. He not only recognised the obvious fact—plenty of others did that—of the abiding and growing strength of the Soviet Union as the principal World Power alongside the United States in the post-war world. He also saw that this meant that a new social and economic system had come to stay, whose influence would probably extend among the peoples who had been through the fires of the struggle against fascism. In the words of Wallace's speech:—

> Russian ideas of social-economic justice are going to govern nearly a third of the world.

The Munichite press has fiercely attacked this statement as equivalent to a doctrine of "spheres of influence" partitioning the world. On the contrary. Denial of this is equivalent to a doctrine of war, demanding that one-third of the world surrender to a pattern imposed by Western capitalism.

Co-operation or Conflict

In consequence Roosevelt saw that the way to peace in the changing pattern of the post-war world lay, not merely in the formal structure of the United Nations (such a merely formal structure could perish like the League of Nations), but in the conscious acceptance of the principle of the peaceful co-existence and co-operation of the two contrasting social systems, of capitalism, embodied above all in the United States, and of socialism, embodied in the Soviet Union. The political expression of this lay in the closest Soviet-American co-operation as the pivot, and the partnership of the three World Powers, the United States, the Soviet Union and Britain, in leading the post-war world, settling all issues by mutual agreement and frank recognition of each other's interests, and maintaining world peace. Within such conditions of peace the two contrasting social systems could unfold their potentialities in peaceful competition, and the peoples could make their choice. The political corollary of this was the destruction of fascism and all vestiges of fascism throughout the world, the ending of the British colonial system, and the establishment of democracy—which was defined, as the signed agreements showed, as excluding all fascist and pro-fascist organisations and including Communism and Communist Parties.

Reviving Roosevelt

The value of Wallace's stand is that he has restated the essential lines of Roosevelt's policy in current terms, and presented it as a platform for progressive opinion in the present critical international situation. He not only showed how far the present policies of the Anglo-American bloc, the aggressive military plans of world domination of American imperialism and British colonial policies and Middle East manoeuvres, have travelled away from the lines of Roosevelt, of Teheran and Crimea. He also brought back these issues to the fundamental problem, and showed how it was the blind reactionary fear and hatred of the Soviet Union and Communism which was responsible for these policies and endangering world peace.

> For the first time in our history defeatists among us have raised the fear of another system as a successful rival to democracy and free enterprise in other countries and perhaps even our own.

Against this he sets the liberal capitalist viewpoint in similar terms to those in which Roosevelt saw it:—

> I am convinced that we can meet that challenge as we have in the past by demonstrating that economic abundance can be achieved without sacrificing personal, political and religious liberties. We cannot meet it as Hitler tried to by an anti-Comintern alliance. . . .
>
> The slogan that Communism and capitalism cannot continue to exist in the same world is from a historical point of view pure propaganda. . . .
>
> We must recognise that the world has changed and that today there can be no

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"One World" unless the United States and Russia can find some way of living together. . . .

This proposal admittedly calls for a shift in some of our thinking about international matters.

A Practical Policy

On this basis he put forward his practical proposals for a new approach; for recognition of Soviet vital interests in the region immediately on its borders; abandonment of the Anglo-American attempt to interfere and lay down the law in every corner of the world, even in those nearest to the Soviet Union (Dardanelles, Danube, etc.), while hotly resenting any interference with Anglo-American domination of two-thirds of the world (Suez, Mediterranean, Panama, etc.); negotiations for mutually beneficial economic arrangements; credits to the Soviet Union without political conditions, etc. It will be seen that this represents a common-sense realist approach, on the basis of which, as Stalin's statement has shown, agreement could easily be reached with the Soviet Union and with the Eastern European countries, and all the supposedly insoluble differences could admit of solution. But it is the antithesis of the methods of atom bomb diplomacy; of the dispatch of hectoring notes and ultimatum after ultimatum to every smaller country (Iceland, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Jugoslavia, Hungary, Poland, etc.) to demand compliance with Anglo-American wishes; and attempts to turn international conferences from a meeting ground for negotiating agreement under the responsible guiding leadership of the Powers to an arena for voting down every proposal for a negotiated settlement that does not conform to the requirements of Anglo-American imperialist domination.

The Great Alternative

These issues will come to the forefront with the first General Assembly of the United Nations and the meetings of the Council of Fo Ministers to consider the Paris C ference recommendations and still u settled questions and the agenda for the settlement on Germany. We are thus approaching a critical point in the international situation. The lines of the post-war world are not yet set. The situation is still fluid. Big changes can still take place. The confrontation of a reactionary Anglo-American bloc against the Soviet Union and the progressive peoples of the world is not inevitable. But the dangerous tendencies that exist are obvious. We can still reverse those tendencies. But the time is short. The decisions that are now due to be taken will govern the lines of development for the next decade. Are those lines to be set for peace or for war? Socialism, confident in the future, strives for peace. Reaction, fearing the future, fingers the atom bomb and prates of a third world war. The choice rests with the peoples. And in that choice we in Britain can play a decisive part.

Which Way Britain?

For no country is this choice more important than for Britain. The Soviet Union is strong today to face every alternative with calm and unshakable confidence; and that confidence was expressed in Stalin's statement when he discounted the immediate scares of war and affirmed that the ruling circles of Britain and America could not carry through a capitalist encirclement of the Soviet Union even if they so desired it (he did not assert that they were not attempting or would not attempt it, but explicitly reserved judgment on that point). The United States has still abundant reserves of strength to survive many mistakes—even though the economic cracks in its system and impending dilemmas are becoming more and more obvious to all. But Britain, in its present weakened and critical national and inter-

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national situation, cannot afford mistakes.

The Choice for Britain

Is Britain to be dragged down as the dependent subordinate in the clutches of the most reactionary forces of American capitalism, the impoverished paymaster and manpower-short supplier of armed forces for every reactionary regime all over the world, and finally the advance outpost, the atom bomb base and the predestined victim for a future war of American imperialism for world domination? Or is Britain to go forward as the equal partner in firm alliance with the Soviet Union, with the new democracies in Europe and with the advancing progressive peoples of the world, thereby also playing a decisive part in changing the balance of world forces and thus helping to bring about the necessary change in American policy? This is the choice today before the British people. The answer to this question will be decisive, not only for the future of Britain's world position, but also for the future of reconstruction in Britain and for the future of the British labour movement.

R. P. D.

October 21, 1946.

POSTSCRIPT

The speeches of Churchill, Bevin and Attlee in the House of Commons' debate on foreign affairs on October 22 to 23, as well as of President Truman in opening the United Nations Assembly, have underlined the serious character of the issues which have to be faced. Churchill sounded the most challenging war note yet heard from any leading statesman since the close of the war, and called for still closer association of the Labour Government and Toryism in continuous consultation. Bevin, who denied any intention of "ganging up," in fact proclaimed, amid Tory applause, the line of the Anglo-American monopolist bloc in opposition to the Soviet Union and European democracy on every issue. Attlee opened a threat against the veto, the essential bulwark to prevent disruption of the United Nations and the obstacle standing in the way of plans for Anglo-American imperialist domination in the United Nations machinery. This provocative line was carried a stage further in Attlee's anti-Soviet diatribe at the Trades Union Congress. On the other hand, Truman's speech showed more understanding of the necessity for co-operation between the two social and economic systems, and warned against talk of war and the exaggeration of present differences; if the form was general, the tone differed from that of Vandenberg, Byrnes, Bevin and Churchill. The choice which stands before the people, between the path of co-operation and the path of conflict, is inescapable.

R. P. D.

October 24, 1946.

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The Soviet Anniversary

by D. N. PRITT, K.C., M.P.

TWENTY-NINE years now. What have the Soviet peoples done in those years? It is worth recalling some of the old achievements, just as our slanderers are trotting out the old lies—some borrowed from Goebbels, some of their own manufacture, of a vintage before Goebbels went into business.

The Soviet Union has eliminated unemployment; has put women on a real equality with men; has brought every national minority, however backward or oppressed before, to the same position as the old "Great Russians"; has ended the exploitation of man by man; has carried the class struggle to victory; made the backward prison-house of scant industries and out-of-date agriculture into the second—soon to be the first—great power; and raised its peoples' cultural level to incredible heights.

And whilst devoting their energies to those great achievements, the Soviet peoples also prepared themselves to face, and faced, the heaviest blows of the most powerful and brutal enemy the world has seen, and waged victorious war for four years through the most appalling human and material losses in history.

It is well to bear in mind these things when so many are ready to forget or ignore that the material losses alone amounted to:—

70,000 towns and villages razed to the ground.

Six million houses and buildings demolished.

4,100 railway stations destroyed.

30,000 industrial plants stripped.

90,000 collective farms destroyed.

Sixty-four million livestock stolen or destroyed.

It meant (to give one general and one local example) (1) that the German invaders destroyed more dwelling-space than had been created since 1917; and (2) that 20,000 wagon-loads of scrap metal had to be moved out of one assembly shop in the tractor plant at Stalingrad before its reconstruction could even begin.

Even *The Times* was compelled to make the significant admission that

> There is nothing in Europe, even in Germany, to equal in thoroughness the devastation of Western Russia. Between Lodz, in Central Poland, and Moscow there is no town of any importance which has survived the war with less than three-quarters of its buildings destroyed.
>
> —*The Times*, September 18, 1946

It is even necessary at the moment to point out—what should be obvious—that these people, with that history, do not want any more war. With their economic system they have no need for war; in their country there is no profit *for anybody* in war; they have no problem that can be solved or even alleviated by war—on the contrary, war would put off the solution of their problems and create new ones for them; and there is nothing in their world that could of itself, directly or indirectly, bring about a war. They have no motive to insist on any term in any treaty unless they are profoundly convinced that that term is essential to avoid future wars and keep peace safe; but they cannot be thought unreasonable if they hold that peace is safer if they remain strong themselves and have friendly neighbours.

Let us take the measure at once of what they are thinking of—so inconsistent with any idea of war—and of the magnitude of the tasks before them, by reflecting on some of the figures of the new Five-year plan.

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It is a plan drawn to remedy as far as possible human losses reckoned in millions, and material losses, the volume of which I have indicated above.

In this plan, facing problems thus illustrated, the planned increase in the total wealth of the U.S.S.R. is 38 per cent.—an important factor in the whole material *and* cultural condition of the people.

The industrial basis for this development requires an increase in the output of industry by 1950 of nearly half as much again as the pre-war level; while agricultural output must go up by a little over a quarter.

The main industrial targets set by the plan for 1950 include:—

(1) Pig-iron output 19.5 million tons and steel 25.4 million tons, together making an increase of 35 per cent. above the pre-war level.

(2) Coal 250 million tons, or over half as much again as pre-war.

(3) Oil 35.4 million tons, or 14 per cent. above pre-war.

(4) Electric power 82 thousand million kilowatt-hours, or 70 per cent. above pre-war.

That such targets should be set in a country where the devastation exceeds anything hitherto known—the mere physical destruction wrought by the Germans, quite apart from deaths, dislocation of economy and war privations, amounts to five times the annual national income pre-war—is remarkable enough. But, still more remarkable, this "five year plan for the restoration and development of the national economy of the U.S.S.R." aims at the restoration of industrial production to pre-war (1940) level by 1948, i.e., in three years. After the first world war and the civil war it took all of six years to restore industry to the pre-war (1913) level. Now they will carry through their greater task at twice the speed.

The details of these and a hundred other targets in industry, transport, agriculture, etc., together with the plans for each of the sixteen republics can be read, and should be read, by everyone who wants to grasp the potentialities of a socialist State. But the figures which reflect the planned rise in the living conditions of the peoples of the Soviet Union are of particular interest.

The planned number of workers and employees for 1950—the end of the Plan—is over 33,000,000; and tremendous measures are being developed to secure higher and higher qualifications for more and more of them. The "labour reserve," or trade schools, designed for the intensive training of young entrants to industry—to make them skilled workers from the start—have to deal with 4,500,000 in the five years; and factory schools with many more. In industry itself, either in schools or in technical circles, 7,500,000 will be taught; the total number of those already in industry who are to reach higher qualification are 14,000,000. Of the 33,000,000 total mentioned above, no less than 26,000,000 are to reach higher qualifications through one route or another.

Education, health, and social insurance will have a budget in 1950 over 2½ times as great as in 1940; in the same year, 1950, there will be 31,800,000 students in primary and secondary schools, and 670,000 (15 per cent. more than in 1940) in "higher" (i.e., university) establishments. Technicums will have nearly twice that number, half as many again as in 1940. If the promise of greatly increased production tempo and efficiency given by these figures is fulfilled, production in 1950 will have a wholly new aspect.

Housing difficulties, never small and appallingly multiplied during the war, will be tackled on a great scale; the planned investment in housing is Rs.42,300,000,000, as compared to

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Rs.15,500,000,000 in the third five year plan. State building alone plans to create an additional 72,500,000 square metres of housing space, whilst "individual building" with state financial help is to produce a further 12,000,000 square metres in towns alone. In the country 3,400,000 houses are planned, of which 2,240,000 are in devastated areas.

These tremendous efforts, helped on by Socialist competition, will not solve the housing problems; but they will go a long way, and will ensure a substantial solution within a few years after 1950.

Hospital accommodation will increase by 275,000 beds over 1940; children's places in nurseries of all kinds will increase by 393,000, or 40 per cent. Payments in respect of confinements and to mothers of large families will total over five times as much as in 1940.

Truly, the Soviet peoples can face their anniversaries with shining eyes. And only lunatics could want to fight them, or could imagine that they want to fight anyone else; but capitalism makes some people behave like lunatics.

But Socialists can view their achievements with pride, can rejoice with them, and can resolve that we, too, can improve both our politics and our economics, and can show them in due course that we, too, can perform our miracles.

Peace-making at Paris

by QUAESTOR

IN the August LABOUR MONTHLY, tracing the proceedings at the Paris Conference of Foreign Ministers held in June and July, 1946, we saw three main features of the present relations between Britain, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. The first was that a determined effort to find agreement on practical questions always showed the hollowness of talk about "fundamental cleavages between West and East." The second and third were a remarkable tenderness of the British and American Governments for the relics of fascism in Europe, recalling the pre-war policy of encouraging Hitler to "go East": and a hostility to the Soviet Union on the part of the British and American Governments which also smacked of pre-war days.

These lessons emerge even more clearly from the proceedings of the Conference on Peace Treaties with the satellite ex-enemy States—Italy, Finland, Hungary, Roumania and Bulgaria—held in Paris from July to October. They are thrown into still higher relief by two enormously publicised speeches of the most reactionary politicians in the British Empire today—Churchill, who first broke inter-Allied unity in the interests of fascism, by sending British troops into action against the Greek Resistance movement in December, 1944; and Smuts, who first opened the ideological attack on Allied unity by his anti-Soviet speeches of November, 1943, and January, 1944 (LABOUR MONTHLY, May, 1944).

Churchill at Zurich (September 19, 1946), in a blatant echo of the notorious message once brought him by Hess, lamented that "the Germanic races" had been "tearing each other to pieces." He declared that the Dark Ages "may still return," that "some new form of tyranny or terror" is threatening, that "time may be short," and that Europe is dwelling "precariously under the shield, and I will even say protection, of the atomic

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bomb.'' There was only one remedy—to form ''the United States of Europe''—and for this purpose the first step must be the creation of a partnership between France and present-day Germany. Just as in 1940 Churchill attempted to take advantage of France's defeat to place her under British dominion—the true significance of his offer of ''joint citizenship'' in conditions then prevailing—so he now attempted to use her difficulties to force her into his anti-Soviet bloc. He even had the insolence to suggest to the great French people—with their revolutionary traditions of 1793, of 1830, of 1848, of 1871, and of the anti-German rising of 1944—that only in this way could they ''recover the moral and cultural leadership of Europe''!

This would-be disciple of the medieval Teutonic Knights—the first Crusaders who massacred peaceful Slav tribes in the name of Christianity—has his tawdry squire too. Always ready to oblige, General Smuts took up the tale. Broadcasting through the B.B.C. on September 29, he announced that Europe was ''scarcely in her right mind'': the situation was ''far more critical'' than after the last war: someone was causing quarrels among the Great Powers—and it wasn't Britain or America: was ''world power or domination the secret aim?'' He wouldn't know — but ''flying bombs (are) now seen nightly in the west'': (as cold-blooded an utterance as anything ever emitted by a politician). In a speech to the Dutch Parliament on October 11, Smuts took the matter further. Churchill was the most disinterested of all European politicians, he told his gaping audience, who hadn't read the proceedings of the Tory Conference at Blackpool. If Britain was too modest to take the lead in European federation, let some smaller States take the lead, or else form a smaller group, or else an Economic Council—he didn't mind which, provided that Germany was in it. Then ''there may be a flowering of European genius such as,'' etc., etc.

The importance of these speeches does not lie in those who uttered them: what right has a politician so recently and decisively rejected by the British electorate to speak for Britain, or the Premier of a State based upon the disgusting and uncivilised principles of racial domination to pose as the champion of culture and civilisation? It was the tremendous and obviously prearranged publicity given to the speeches by official channels like the Foreign Office and the B.B.C., as well as by the millionaire press: and the ostentatious refusal of Labour Ministers to condemn them: these are the circumstances that made them important.

Once the keynote is clear—an alliance of as much of Europe as possible against the U.S.S.R., with a revived capitalist Germany as the spearhead pointed at the new democracies, and an Anglo-American bloc in control—the discordant sounds that rose from the Peace Conference become quite intelligible. A glance at the proceedings will provide all the evidence that could be required.

An essential principle of all Big Four agreements during the war about the enemy satellites was that they must make due reparation in kind to the countries which they had ravaged. But sixteen hours in six sittings, as Molotov pointed out, were spent at Paris in breaking down opposition, inspired and encouraged by Bevin and Byrnes, to the figure of Italian reparations to the U.S.S.R. ($100 millions, one-twentieth of the damage done in the U.S.S.R. by Italian forces) which the Big Four themselves had fixed. Although Eden on December 18, 1942, and Churchill on November 4, 1943, had paid enthusiastic tribute to the

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gallant struggle of the Albanian people against the Italian oppressors and ravagers of their country, the British delegation took the lead in successfully opposing any payment of reparations to Albania at all. The Australian delegation, with tacit British support, tried to get all payments of reparations postponed for six months; and, failing that, to oblige the ex-enemy States to pay them in dollars or sterling. This meant that they would first have to export their produce to Britain or America or their nominees, to get the currency needed (the South African delegation chimed in at this point, with the demand that "fair prices" should be fixed by the Allies): and then that the U.S.S.R. and other ravaged countries would have to spend the dollars and sterling on British and American goods. The United States delegation, breaking the pledged word of its government, tried to secure a reduction of Finnish reparations from $300 millions to $200 millions, and of Hungarian reparations by the same amounts—of course out of compassion for Finland and Hungary. It was left to the Soviet delegation to ask why, in that case, the Americans were holding in Germany 1,300 Hungarian railway engines, 50,000 goods trucks, 600,000 cattle, 250,000 horses, 500,000 sheep, etc., that had been handed over to the Nazis by their Hungarian agents?

Another essential principle, proclaimed repeatedly by the major Allies, was that fascism must be rooted out in the liberated countries generally, and particularly in the ex-enemy satellites. The armistice terms for Italy had contained a specific pledge that fascist organisations and institutions would be destroyed, and fascists removed from public life: and the peace treaties with the other satellites contain an express provision to this effect. Molotov observed (October 9) that there was urgent need to include a similar clause in the Italian treaty:—

One cannot fail to see that attempts to resurrect fascism in Italy continue. Even such a right-wing political leader of Italy as Sforza utters a warning in his recently published book about the danger of the neo-fascism in Italy which has sprung up to succeed the openly criminal fascism of old. Pacciardi, one of the leaders of the Italian Republican Party, recently gave a warning through the press that "royalist and fascist groups are openly working to destroy the republic. Key positions in the administration are occupied by enemies of the republican system who are sabotaging the efforts of the ministers." Judicial bodies in Italy time and again acquit prominent leaders of fascism who belonged to the clique of Mussolini's intimate friends. Time and again underground fascist organisations are discovered in various districts of Italy. Time and again recur open sallies by the fascists who disseminate literature, suddenly seize radio stations for fascist propaganda, and so forth.

But a clause embodying the necessary obligations on Italy was rejected by the efforts of the British and American delegation. So also was a clause refusing civil rights in Trieste to Italian fascist officials, war criminals, or police. And Bulgaria, which alone among all the satellites already had a vast underground resistance movement in 1940 (as was testified at the time by *The Times*), where thousands of workers and peasants lost their lives in fighting fascism as guerillas from 1941 to 1944, and where—again unique among the ex-enemy satellites—some 1,600 leading fascists, from a prince of the blood downwards, had been tried and executed since 1945, found herself penalised for this very reason. The British delegation even opposed a reference in the preamble of the draft peace treaty recognising that Bulgarian forces had been fighting the Germans before the Armistice was signed (October 28, 1944). Rooting out fascism doesn't pay, according to Mr. Bevin's ideas of right and wrong.

But in revenge the Western Allies showed precisely what they thought of

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another principle: *that the defeated countries, after extirpating fascism and paying reparations, should be allowed to build up a democratic society in freedom.* While generously pressing for a scaling down of reparations in kind to ravaged countries like the U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia, the British and American delegations were in adamant mood when properties belonging to British and U.S. millionaires were concerned. They began by demanding the return of, and full freedom of working for, all nationalised works, and 100 per cent. compensation for all damage done by hostilities (the U.S.S.R had had to be content with 5 per cent. from Italy, 20 per cent. from Roumania, etc.). They secured a 12-5 defeat of a proposal that the percentage of compensation in such cases should be the same as that fixed for reparations. In strident tones, and after the Americans and French had withdrawn their claims, Mr. Bevin on October 10 demanded (as a great concession) "only" 75 per cent. of the capital value of British properties destroyed, and freedom for Allied oil companies to operate in Roumania—just as previously the British delegation had demanded freedom and full compensation for Allied insurance companies there. This championship of some of the biggest concerns of British capitalism came with particular grace from the Government which had secured 12 million British working-class votes, fifteen months before, by declaring, in *Let Us Face the Future:*—

> Does freedom for the profiteer mean freedom for the ordinary man and woman, whether they be wage earners or small business or professional men or housewives? . . . The British labour movement comes to the tasks of international organisation with one great asset: it has a common bond with the working peoples of all countries, who have achieved a new dignity and influence through their long struggle against Nazi tyranny.

How mockingly these words must sound to the workers of Greece, shot down by British soldiers, deprived of their trade unions by a fascist government resting on British bayonets and a British-trained police! Yes, but perhaps not so mockingly even then as Mr. Bevin's plea on the same occasion, for the restoration of the so-called "international regime" on the Danube—meaning the control of this vital artery of the Danube States by the non-Danubian Great Powers. "Our policy has been labelled one of economic enslavement," cried Bevin: "but how can it be enslavement if we ask exactly the same treatment for all?" Why do the wicked Socialists say that England isn't a free country—it used to be asked—when everyone is free to own a factory or a newspaper, dine at the Ritz and send his son to Eton? As Molotov replied, recalling that in the four years of war U.S. national income had increased by 65 billion dollars:—

> If you compare Rumania or Yugoslavia with the position of the United States, if you give equality of opportunity, what will remain of their industries? All these could be purchased by American capital in a short time, which would then become master in those countries.

Particularly impressive was the further development of open and blatant hostility to Balkan countries which had dared to effect national and social revolutions after the war. This was already noticeable at the Foreign Ministers' Conference in the summer, and Albania as well as Yugoslavia was the object of attack. The British delegation opposed the invitation of Albania (just as at the Security Council it opposed Albania's admission to the United Nations): it supported Greek demands for Albanian territory, and tried (August 31) to prevent the Yugoslavs speaking in support of Albania against the Greek demands: it opposed Albania's claim to be treated as an associ-

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ated power — despite the wartime speeches of Eden and Churchill already mentioned: it led the opposition to any reparations being granted to Albania: and—not the least sordid and disgraceful incident in Mr. Bevin's work at Paris—it actually joined (October 10) in rejecting Albania's claim that the national gold reserve, confiscated by fascist Italy, should be returned! Thus the reward of the Albanian people for their guerilla struggle against many German and Italian divisions, throughout the war, was the presentation of their national wealth to Italy—by Mr. Bevin and Mr. Byrnes. The systematic, sustained and venomous enmity of Bevin and Byrnes to Yugoslavia was, of course, still more apparent. Apart from several minor issues, it showed itself most explicitly on the question of Trieste. It was the British delegation, warmly supported by the American, that took the "moral lead" here—insisting that the Governor appointed by the Security Council should have such full powers as would convert the future Free Territory into a police State, like any British Crown Colony: opposing the Soviet proposal that one of his first obligations should be to arrange for free elections within three months: opposing another Soviet proposal that the Free Territory should be proclaimed neutral, and all foreign troops withdrawn within thirty days after signature of the treaty: and insisting that a large area north and south of the city, containing an indubitably Slav majority, should be detached from Yugoslavia and added to the Free Territory. Well might the Yugoslavs state that they would refuse to sign such a treaty: and well might Manuilsky, the chief Ukrainian delegate, retort to the Dutch and Australians who criticised them:—

> What would Holland's reaction be, if it were proposed to her that Rotterdam and an adjacent territory, covering 717 square kilometres, should be turned into a free port in order to satisfy the claims of a State which had attacked her? What would the Australian representative say if, on the pretext of establishing an equilibrium between Australia and Japan, it were proposed to them that a similar operation be performed with Melbourne or Port Darwin?

The bitter words of the Yugoslav delegates also need to be recorded, precisely because they bring out the full stigma of infamy which will be attached to the Labour Government's name throughout the Balkans. On the reparations issue (October 4) the Yugoslav delegate Bartos said to the British and Americans:—

> In the years of struggle against the common enemy, when the Yugoslav people fought in the most difficult conditions against fascism, when the Yugoslavs were spilling their blood for the common victory, you promised that after victory you would help us to restore our wrecked towns and villages. We believed you and we fought. But today, gentlemen, you have given here a graphic lesson to us how much one can believe your promises!

It is perhaps necessary to recall that Yugoslavia lost 10 per cent. of her population in the most savage guerilla war ever waged outside the Soviet Union. Recalling the bloody struggles of the past for the freedom of the South Slav lands, and the opposition which that cause had encountered, time and again, at the hands of "Western democracy," the head of the Yugoslav delegation (Kardelj) said on October 8:—

> In the 19th century the representatives of certain Western Powers sought to preserve the integrity of Turkey at the cost of oppressing the Southern Slavs. They needed this to secure their influence in the Balkans. For the same reasons they shielded the integrity of Austria-Hungary, which was a prison for the Slav peoples. Today, for the same reasons, the representatives of certain Western Great Powers are defending the imperialist claims of Italy.

Obviously such a policy of favouring fascism at the expense of the U.S.S.R.

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or of the smaller new democracies could not be put into effect without further gross breaches of *the principle of the unity of the Great Powers*, to which so much lip service was paid by British and American leaders during the war. The responsibility for those breaches is quite unmistakable: for from the very beginning of the Peace Conference the British and American heads of delegation were in constant consultation, preparing agreed proposals and presenting their Soviet ally, as well as the smaller countries, with peremptory and ready-made decisions. This applied even to questions of procedure in the early stages of the Conference (who was to be chairman, whether the two-thirds majority rule was to apply, whether Austria was to be invited, and so forth), no less than to the major political questions referred to earlier. Talk of the "Russian satellites" and the "Slav bloc" is so much idle chatter—*when all the proposals brought forward were such as trampled roughshod on the most vital interests of the Slav nations*, and forced them all into the position of constantly having to defend their horribly devastated countries against the "generosity" of the new patrons of European fascism.

Mr. Bevin has well deserved the approval bestowed on him by the Conservatives at their party conference. But what has happened to the "common bond with the working peoples of all countries"?

Why Housing is Slow

by J. RYAN

(London District Organiser, Amalgamated Union of Building Trades Workers)

WHAT is holding up the programme for permanent housing? For it is being held up, despite all the statistics pouring out from the various ministries.

Why, after a year and more of patient waiting, was it necessary for homeless or ill-housed people themselves to enter on habitable but unoccupied camps? Why did the London movement of the squatters, deplored by the chorus of the newspapers and parliamentary spokesmen, gain the widest support amongst trade unionists?* Why, for example, was the postbag of the *News-Chronicle* 90 per cent. in favour of the squatters, in opposition to the paper's own editorial policy that property rights came first?

Undoubtedly the reason for this support was not only in a natural sympathy for the worst-housed and homeless, but in a knowledge that all was not well with the building programme.

* *Resolution carried by a meeting of the London Trades Council, September* 12, 1946:—

"This meeting of the London Trades Council views with sympathy and understanding the direct action of many working-class families to secure housing accommodation. It refuses to differentiate between different types of squatting, recognising that all squatting is a revolt against intolerable conditions.

"It condemns the refusal of reactionary councils to use their requisitioning powers to take over vacant property to house the people and also the failure of the Government to treat this refusal as of major importance requiring the strongest action.

"It demands that during the period of housing emergency the Government shall refuse to allow labour and materials to be used to recondition luxury flats for letting at high rentals, but that all property suitable for emergency use as housing accommodation shall forthwith be centrally requisitioned and used to house the people. Any doubt as to the suitability to be a final decision of the Ministers of Health and Works."

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Thus the people's attitude to the squatters came as a warning to the Government.

Actually by the first week of September there were signs that the Ministry was beginning to take a serious view of the situation—though not serious enough to prevent them from making themselves a laughing-stock by the ill-timed manifesto from Downing Street against the Communist Party. Indeed, if they had not been blinded by seeing Red, the Government should have been throughly grateful to the squatters and their Communist helpers for having temporarily diminished the size of the housing problem. In less than three months the squatters found for themselves accommodation to the tune of 45,000.

But this is only a temporary relief, affecting only a small fraction of the population. The house-famine, *accentuated* by six years' cessation of building and by Nazi bombs, is hardly affected. The permanent houses are going up far too slowly; and the main problems of the housing programme have still to be solved.

What are the main elements of the problem? First, man-power; second, shortage of materials; third, lack of stimulus for output.

Man-power

Ministry of Health statistics show that by the end of August 130,000 permanent houses were in the course of erection in England and Wales. The labour force engaged on these was 147,000 operatives—or 1⅛ men per house. Houses will not be put up at speed with such a small labour force per house. On this basis it would take nine months to complete 130,000 houses. It would take over four years to get even that three-quarters of a million houses which Aneurin Bevan himself regards as the "minimum immediate requirements." Four years! Hardly an "immediate" solution.

Of course, there are far more than 147,000 builders. Actually 990,000* building operatives are registered or seeking employment in the building and civil engineering industry. Yet little over a seventh of them (or 16½ per cent. if we include 15,900 operatives in Scotland) are engaged on permanent housing.

Where are the others? It is stated that 362,000 operatives are engaged on war damage repairs, maintenance, conversion and adaptation. Another 300,200 are estimated to be on construction and repair work to factories, public utilities, commercial premises and other premises. Lastly 77,000 are unaccounted for: nobody knows where they are.

Clearly there is something wrong with the distribution of building labour. Important as repairs and conversion are, it is of far greater importance to get the labour on to permanent housing.

Two or three examples from my personal experience, illustrate the working of this mal-distribution of labour.

Large L.C.C. contract at Grange Hill, Essex: 3,000 houses to be erected, site all ready. 15 bricklayers! 150 needed. On same site, for one of the contractors, 60 carpenters wanted, 9 working there.

Large L.C.C. contract at Tufnell Park, London, N. 90 bricklayers wanted, 15 there. Even 10 more bricklayers on the job and one block of flats could be ready by Christmas.

At Manor House a large L.C.C. contract (£500,000), 40 bricklayers wanted *now*. 5 there.

These are merely typical examples of the appalling position in respect to skilled labour which prevails on at least thirty-five large housing jobs in the London area, of which I have

* The latest official figure (released by the Government on October 17) gives the number of building and civil engineering operatives at August 31 as 1,225,000. This equals 92 per cent. of the previous (mid-1939) figure.

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direct personal knowledge. The amount of labour which has passed through these jobs exceeds by several times the actual number working on them. Such is the labour position.

Materials

The materials position is equally bad; true, bricks and cement are in more plentiful supply than nine months ago, but this plentiful supply is only relative. If all the labour that should be on housing was now on it there would be a recurrence of the brick famine. Even now, enormous advance requires to be made in conditions of the workers in the brick industry, and in the technical equipment, which is primitive outside of the big firms such as Eastwoods, and Marston Valley Brick Company.

Such essential materials as pipes, sanitary ware, baths, metal frames, electrical fittings, timber and paint are still desperately short, and will be shorter still if we do get the housing jobs staffed to their full needs unless there is a decisive change in the production policy of the Government in relation to these things. A better foreign policy would have brought a better supply of these last two; and the sooner political and commercial policy enables trade to be opened up with Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R., the better it will be for all; but as to the remainder, the chief cause must be sought at home.

Besides these main elements of the problem, there have been this year a series of additional irritations, which seemed to show various authorities as unable or unwilling to take emergency measures. Examples were the red-tape dilly-dally about the release of the camps from their war-time purposes: reactionary local authorities not subjected to sufficient pressure (the London Trades Council spoke of this as the Government's "failure"): the use of labour and materials for luxury flats at high rents: unused accommodation in dwellings and other suitable buildings: the Foreign Office policy of bringing over an additional 150,000 Anders' Poles, when everybody wants to see the back of them and no matter how soon. Until the Government puts on the utmost pressure to requisition habitable empty houses, establishes a closed season for licences and gets rid of Anders' Poles, these things will bedevil the housing problem still further. Moreover, until the Government makes a thoroughgoing effort to ration living-room in inhabited houses, the cry will grow louder, "Why should there be two people in ten rooms while elsewhere ten people are pigging together in two rooms?"

May I now list some causes and immediate remedies for the man-power and materials shortage in the building of permanent houses? The first cause is the black market, which has been spreading all over the building industry. The first remedy is increased prosecutions and heavier penalties, transforming them into long-term imprisonment *plus* ruinous fines.

The second cause is the multitude of unessential licences. The remedy is to withdraw all such licences and to devote all future licences to housing needs and other high priorities (e.g., schools, hospitals, essential industrial and agricultural building) except where urgency is shown by a local authority's statutory notice.

The third cause is the continued registration of new building contractors, of whom no less than 50,000 have appeared in 1946. Many of these appear as a natural corollary of the black market. If each of them took only one man with him, it would mean 100,000 withdrawn from the potential total at work on permanent houses. The first step to remedy this (which is clearly connected with the "lost" 77,000) is to refuse any further such registrations.

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These remedies will go a certain way towards solving the problem, but it is no use pretending that they are a final solution of it. There is a basic solution which will get the manpower and materials on to permanent houses. That is nothing less than the control, by Government bulk purchase, of all materials (bricks, cement, baths, electrical fittings, etc., etc.) cutting out the merchant, the pipe-line to the black market, and ensuring that first needs shall be first served. To this solution the Government will be driven, sooner or later, by the magnitude of the hold-up on permanent housing—which is growing daily.

There remains, apart from manpower and materials, one further element in the problem—the lack of stimulus for output. This is bound up with the fact that so far, despite the four to one rule, the private builder is working at greater speed and has put up more houses than the local authorities.* From the point of view of the Tories, this is jam; but from the Labour standpoint it is a strange situation that the Ministry should have to issue those figures.

Does this mean that private enterprise is beating the Government speed through some inherent excellence in the former? No, it is simply because the private builder is getting the labour, and getting it by means which are forbidden to local authorities. Why can private builders attract labour? First, because private builders are doing all kinds of private work for which they are paid up to any amount by their private clients, there being no price controls on any but new housing. Second, because, even when private builders are putting up houses, they can (despite Regulation 56 A, B, which lays it down that conditions shall be neither more nor less than those agreed in the industry) offer all sorts of extras. They can give extra payments of 2d. or 3d. an hour or much as 6d. an hour more than the standard time-rate: and where, as in London, the craftsman's rate is 2s. 7½d. per hour and the labourer's rate is 2s. 1½d. an hour for a forty-four hour week, it will be seen what a big percentage difference this makes. They can pay the income tax of their craftsmen: they can book and pay for hours which are not worked; and in many other ways they can find loop-holes, apart from direct piece-working.

All these, of course, are concealed forms of piece-work. They have the usual effect of piece-work that output goes up and earnings with it.

To piece-work and to all such systems of payment by results, the building trade unions are traditionally opposed. But here we have a situation in which many members are receiving from private contractors either direct piece-work wages or extra payments which all have the effect on output of piece-work and are indeed a concealed form of piece-work. Since no one is proposing that these members be expelled, it becomes almost a kind of hypocrisy to refuse to face these facts or to decline to discuss this strange situation in which output is higher on private work than on public work.

When Mr. Aneurin Bevan says pointedly: "Everything that the Government can do has now been done; the rest is up to the industry" it is clear that he is referring to the need for a far greater speed of output on local authority housing than is at present the case.

But, in fact, the Government has not done all that could be done, nor will they have done it until the steps outlined above in relation to materials, etc., have been taken. At present, the work on the Government housing pro-

* NEW PERMANENT HOUSES by July 31, 1946:—

Local authorities	3,560
Private builders under licence	10,610

Housing Return Cmd. 6889.

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gramme holds little attraction for the building operative. Broken time, owing to bad weather, is a constant hardship for the building worker, and particularly on housing jobs. Statutory holidays still represent a "lock-out without pay," and the rates of wages are still below what represents a decent minimum. Yet Mr. Bevan, which presumably includes the Government, declares his support for the current demands of building workers for a further 6d. per hour, with payment for statutory holidays, and a guaranteed week.

It was possible during the war to guarantee the building worker a week's wages, it should be no less possible now.

Of course, Mr. Bevan, quite rightly, is anxious to secure some guarantee of greatly increased output.

In that case, he should be prepared to meet the building unions on this question and give them the guarantees they feel are necessary if a form of payment by results is accepted.

Such a form would have to be:—

(*a*) Collective.

(*b*) Based in such a way that intricate and difficult work is properly allowed for.

(*c*) Capable of easy understanding by the workers.

(*d*) Payable weekly, yet related to output of house or flat equivalents.

(*e*) Subject to careful supervision of work by building inspectors so as to ensure the highest quality of work.

(*f*) And finally, confined entirely to houses, flats and certain essential works as agreed to by the Government and trades unions.

Such a system is highly practicable and removes the workers' objections based on the evil practices of "piecemasters," the discriminations inherent in the Ministry of Works system of bonuses; the craftsman's hostility to shoddy work, and the fear that acceptance of a P.B.R. system will be used to lower the builders' basic rates.

If the Government *and the unions* could agree on such a system as I have outlined (and with proper guarantees for the workers) the calamitous slowness in building permanent houses, due mainly to shortages on the job of manpower and shortages of materials, could be changed to one of dramatic speed. The Government's housing programme, instead of being a repellent factor by virtue of the present conditions of employment, would, by reason of the enormous advantages offered, become a most powerful magnet to attract all the best building workers in Britain. The key factors in the winning of the battle for homes are, materials, labour, productivity. I have tried to show what steps are needed to obtain and utilise to the full these factors. It is up to the Government and the unions to make a great and united effort to so use them. The houses will then be a reality.

The Editor of LABOUR MONTHLY will be very glad to receive contributions in the form of finished articles or of suggestions and data for articles. The customary proviso must be made that no responsibility is undertaken for manuscripts sent to him nor can he promise to enter into any correspondence regarding contributions not accepted.

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"Reconstruction" in Burma

by RICHARD AUSTIN

THE recent appointment of a Colonial Development Board has once again drawn attention to the poverty and backwardness of the colonial countries of the British Empire. It is recognised that the monopoly-capitalists draw a large reserve of strength from colonial exploitation. In the struggle which is now developing for the implementation of Labour's programme, an examination of colonial policy is of practical and immediate importance for the working-class movement.

The implications of the Atlantic Charter and other pronouncements by leading politicians during the war years, and the return to power of a Labour Government in Britain held out to the colonial peoples the promise, that even if they were "not yet ripe" for complete independence, at least they would not again be exploited in the old way. A year after the General Election and the victory in the Far East, it is pertinent to enquire to what extent these hopes have been realised.

For this purpose, a study of "reconstruction" in Burma provides an excellent example and touchstone. Up to 1941 Burma presented all the classic features of imperialist exploitation of a colony. The economy of the country was completely dominated by foreign (British, and to a much less extent, Indian) capital; industry was practically non-existent; small scale agriculture and the extraction of such primary products as timber, oil and wolfram, constituted more than 90 per cent. of production; it was necessary to import all manufactured commodities.

To what extent do these features continue a year after liberation?

Do the plans of the Burma Office provide for any change in this classic system of exploitation, with its inevitable complement of political repression?

After two campaigns, and three years of Japanese plunder, Burma is one of the most devastated countries in the world, comparable only with parts of the Soviet Union.

There is a grave and absolute shortage of cloth, of transport, of housing, and even of food in a country which had, before the war, an exportable surplus of three million tons of rice (which would, if available today, save the lives of millions in Asia, now condemned to die of starvation). Thus there is not only the possibility, but also an urgent necessity for adequate plans of reconstruction based on the needs of the people.

The answer of the Government to the problem is the "projects" based on an apparently generous interest-free loan of £87,000,000 from the British Treasury. The significant features of these projects, which cover rice, timber, electric power, road and water transport, and all staple trades, are as follows:—

(*a*) Like the loan itself, the details are secret, and demands for concrete information have been met with refusals.

(*b*) The plans were prepared by the bureaucrats of the Governor's entourage in exile in Simla, and have been imposed on Burma without any discussion or consultation with the representatives of the Burmese people.

(*c*) They provide for the re-establishment of a hegemony, even more complete than pre-war, of British capital, to the almost complete exclusion of Burmese interests.

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(*d*) It is clear already that not only do the projects mean no improvements in wages and conditions for the workers involved, but that under their cover, a determined attempt is being made to beat down already starvation standards.

Despite the curtain of secrecy, certain details have, in fact, become available, and indicate what lies behind the schemes which were described by the late Governor, Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, in a particularly unhappy phrase as "state socialism," and which bear a remarkable resemblance to the schemes under which the Japanese Army of Occupation organised its regime of plunder and exploitation.

The Rice Project appointed as sole agents for Lower Burma, A.B.C. and Steele Bros., the two largest foreign firms. Only in Upper Burma, where the rice crop is comparatively unimportant, was a Burmese agent appointed. For civil supplies an impressive list of agents (including Imperial Tobacco Co., Lever Bros., etc.) contains not a single Burmese name. Under the electric power scheme it is proposed to take over all power stations in the country (which are usually small native enterprises), but strangely enough not the foreign-owned Rangoon Electric Supply Company.

It is only in the case of Inland Water Transport that the financial arrangements between the authorities and the "agents" are known, but here they are sufficiently startling to explain the coyness of the Governor about any publicity. River transport is of supreme importance in Burma, and prewar the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company carried yearly over 1¼ million tons of cargo and 6 million passengers. The Governor hires the existing assets of the company at 3 per cent. interest, plus depreciation. New capital of £8 million is to be supplied by the company and the Governor in the ratio of 1 to 7, and on this total the company receives commission at the rate of 2 per cent., plus a contribution of £7,000 per annum rising to £14,000 towards "Overhead expenses in the U.K." On termination of the agreement, the company has the option of purchasing the government-provided assets at first cost less depreciation.

It may be noted that the agreement implies that compensation for war-damage will be paid to the company; such compensation has not been paid, nor has any liability been admitted to the thousands of Burmese families who lost all their possessions, or even to dependants of guerillas who were killed or wounded fighting against the Japanese.

Thus the I.F.C. enjoys not only security against competition and depreciation and a generous rate of interest on its own capital, but also draws 2 per cent. on funds provided by the British taxpayer. In short, behind the backs of the Burmese people, and at the expense of them and of the British taxpayer, a foreign monopoly is re-established.

These facts make it apparent that alongside the promises of Dominion status, there is actually taking place a determined attempt to reintroduce, backed by all the power of the State, the complete monopoly of British capital so that whatever regime may exist, Burma may still be a reservoir of cheap raw materials and cheap labour, and a source of super-profits. It is inevitable that the political complement of such an economic policy is one of reaction and repression.

The most significant feature of the Burmese political scene is the emergence of a broad and radical national movement—the Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League (AFPFL)—in which the Communist Party has played a leading role during the days of Anti-Jap resistance and since the British re-occupation. Although the AFPFL has had the undisputed support of the

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Burmese people, there has always existed within it a danger of differences at the leadership level, thanks to political inexperience and political-economic backwardness of a people whose economy is 90% agricultural. From the outset Imperialism has sought to exploit this danger and to reintroduce those political intrigues and personal groupings which characrerised pre-1942 Burma.

The return of the civil government in October, 1945, in the person of Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith (Minister of Agriculture in the Chamberlain Government) marked the inception of a policy of hostility towards A.F.P.F.L. of which the logical conclusion could only be open repression and bloodshed. This policy has shown distinct though overlapping phases. First, attempts to characterise A.F.P.F.L. (which then comprised ALL the political parties) as a ''totalitarian'' body and somehow to invent, if there could not be found, an ''opposition'' party. When no single Burman could be persuaded to oblige with such a ''party,'' U Saw, pre-war premier, interned in 1940 on grounds of correspondence with Japan, was brought back from Uganda in a special plane.

With the failure of propaganda and intrigue, the authorities moved on to a policy of open and violent repression. Offices of A.F.P.F.L., the peasant unions, trade unions and the Communist Party have been raided, and many local leaders arrested. At Waw, the police charged women hunger marchers with clubs; seven were arrested, and fourteen injured. At Tantabin, a demonstration was fired on, causing several fatalities.

The authorities attempted to muzzle the press, by suspension (*Taing Chit*, Mandalay) and by demands for the deposit of ''securities'' so high as to be difficult or impossible to produce. (Lord Kemsley has not so far protested.) One thousand rupees each were demanded from two existing dailies, and before publication from the railwaymen's trade union journal and the Communist Party daily. Prosecutions were instituted against two other periodicals.

This open repression produced such widespread and determined opposition, culminating in a police strike, and a general strike including government employees, that in September, the new Governor, Sir Hubert Rance, initiated yet another approach, indicative of the infinite elasticity of imperialism in defending its position.

The old ''stooge'' Executive Council was dissolved, and a new one formed, which includes representatives of A.F.P.F.L. and U Saw and other splinter parties which have recently emerged with the encouragement of authority. It has been described as an ''Interim Government'' and is intended to serve the same purpose as the interim government in India of maintaining the essence of imperialist domination under cover of a fiction acceptable to the right-wing nationalist leadership. British troops remain. Independence is not recognised.

Although Aung San, leader of the AFPFL and Vice-President of the new Executive Council, is made ''advisor'' to the Governor on defence and external affairs, these subjects, along with the ''scheduled'' (frontier) areas, still remain the personal responsibility of the Governor. The "projects'' are still in operation.

The political position in Burma is further complicated by the development of divisions within the national movement which have affected the Communist Party. Earlier this year a minority of the CP under Thakin Soe broke away to form the ''Burmese Communist Party'' which was subsequently declared illegal by the Government.

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The Communist Party of Burma (the majority section led by Than Tun and Thein Pe) agreed to participate in the new Executive Council and one of its members (Thein Pe) was given the portfolio of agriculture as an AFPFL nominee. At the same time it published certain principles by which it sought to bind the AFPFL members of the new government to that organisation's declared policy for independence and the calling of a Constituent Assembly.

The Right wing of the AFPFL demanded a withdrawal of these proposed conditions for office acceptance and, it now appears, is moving to expel all communists from AFPFL and thus to bring about the very split in national unity so long worked for by Government House. If this disruptive move is successful the danger arises that the new Executive Council (which at any rate has only a conditional executive responsibility and no guarantee of any modification of the white paper proposals) will tend to become an organ of collaboration and compromise.

Thus, in one short year, imperialism has employed a variety of manoeuvres, but has consistently maintained its object of keeping Burma as a source of super profits. This is the reality beside which must be evaluated the "interim governments," the new councils, the Colonial Development Boards, and other institutions which throughout the colonial empire have the same object. These manoeuvres may be a credit to the ingenuity of the Colonial Office, and the Burma Office; they can only be a discredit to the labour movement of Britain, which bears the final responsibility.

Molotov's Final Speech at Paris (October 14, 1946)

IN considering the draft peace treaty with Finland the Conference is concluding its deliberations. Now the general results of the Paris Conference can already be seen. The present Conference has been a first experiment in the broad collaboration of the nations in establishing the peace following the Second World War.

The representatives of big and small States have met here to examine the peace treaties for Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland. These peace treaties should contribute to establishing solid peace in Europe. To fulfil this purpose they should conform to the interests of the nations which desire stable and lasting peace as well as resistance to every attempt at new aggression.

This means that they should pursue the aims of a democratic peace, which is based on recognition of the aggressor's responsibility for his crimes, but not on a feeling of revenge against the vanquished, and which should to the greatest possible extent help to ensure the security of the nations and to rally them against the forces of any possible new aggression.

The Conference was preceded by the rather prolonged work of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the four Great Powers. During this preparatory period, the main issues of the peace treaties were considered; alterations of the frontiers of States were outlined insofar as there were disputed issues in this respect; reparations claims were examined, although this work was not completed; military restrictions were established for the vanquished States, and so forth.

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Agreed decisions were adopted by the four Governments on all these issues. However, there remained certain problems which were not settled in the preparatory stage and were referred to the Peace Conference for consideration. The Conference was to express its opinion both on questions on which agreement had been reached and on all the others. What is now the result of the Conference?

It transpires that questions which had been agreed upon by the four Great Powers received the approval of the Conference of 21 States as well. The changes made by the Conference in this case did not violate the preliminary understanding, except in regard to the statute of Trieste. The discussion at the Conference merely confirmed that these sessions of the treaties fully meet the purposes of a democratic peace, if one reckons with the need for inevitable compromises in questions of this kind.

Thus, we were able to convince ourselves that when the Powers which bore the brunt of the war against our common enemy act jointly and take agreed decisions, this as a rule expresses the will of the overwhelming majority of democratic countries and meets the purpose of establishing a democratic peace. This is the positive result of the Conference's work.

Differences Not Eliminated

The situation is different in regard to those articles of the treaties on which preliminary accord had not been reached. This refers to a group of economic articles, the problem of the statute of Trieste, the shipping regime on the Danube and certain other problems. The results of the work of the Conference in this latter respect do not resemble the results of the discussion on these problems agreed upon by the four powers.

One might have expected that it would be in regard to problems on which accord had not been reached beforehand that the work of the Conference would be particularly useful. In reality, however, the situation was different. These problems proved to be inadequately prepared by the Council of four Ministers. The Conference failed to find ways to eliminate the differences which had previously arisen. And, as was proved by experience, the group which dominated the Conference, beginning with the United States and Britain, did not even desire to do so. They relied on the secure support of the majority of the delegations and sought to make use of this situation in order to make their view prevail.

These calculations, however, were not justified. Nor could they have been justified, since at international conferences, when the equality of all participants is observed, nothing can be obtained by building up a mechanical majority and by disregarding the legitimate interests of other countries, which do not belong to this majority. The dominating group proved once more that it did not want to seek an agreement acceptable to all the participants of the Conference. The result is well known.

The results of the Conference's work cannot be regarded as satisfactory. Treaty articles which had not been agreed upon before the Conference remained unagreed on most occasions. One should have remembered, however, that international conferences do not gather in order to demonstrate differences but in order to find possibilities for achieving agreed opinions by various parties and for working out joint decisions.

The minority, on the other hand, exerted every effort to explain its view-

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point and to call the others to normal co-operation. This, as we hope, should not remain futile. All this places on the Council of Foreign Ministers the major responsibility for the final decisions on which the signing of the treaties will depend.

From the above it is clear what is the main reason for the unsatisfactory results of the Conference's work in regard to a considerable number of problems. From the very outset, and until the end of the Conference, we have observed efforts on the part of a definite group of delegations to hold a dominant position and to dictate its decisions without any regard for the opinion of a considerable number of other delegations.

This was done in various ways, and at times this method created a rather embarrassing situation for the delegations of small countries. One could have expected that the initiative of the small States would have facilitated agreement at this Conference. But did this actually happen? In reality, the delegations of the small States were not infrequently compelled merely to trail in the wake of the dominant trend, in the wake of the majority.

India and the Danube States

Take the Danube problem, or, in other words, the question of including into the peace treaties with the Balkan countries a decision on the convocation of a conference composed of representatives of definite States to consider the problem of Danube shipping, a decision against which all the Danube States objected. No recommendation was adopted on this point at the meeting of the Economic Committee, since no proposal gathered two-thirds of the votes, as required by the procedure of the Committee's work.

The voting at the plenary session yielded a majority of 14 votes against seven in favour of the convocation of such a conference. India, Ethiopia and certain other States proved to be among those 14. It would seem that, in regard to the Danube problem, these States could have adopted a more objective, more sober-minded and more reasonable attitude towards the Danube States. Yet this did not happen.

Why, indeed, had India to insist on the settling of these problems, for instance in the peace treaty with Rumania? What interests of India, what interests of Indians, are affected by the convocation of a Danube conference of one or other kind, on which Britain and the United States so strongly insist? Certainly the leader of the Indian delegation, Sir Samuel Ranganadan, must have expressed for some reasons of his own the opinion that the Indian delegation was deeply interested in this problem and was bound necessarily to insist upon a decision on the Danube with which no single Danubian State at the Conference could agree.

Everyone of us, however, understands that if this had been the voice of independent India, if we had been confronted with the voice of a representative of true India, as demanded by all honest democrats throughout the world, we could have expected more objective voting on the part of India, whereas now we have been again confronted with an impermissible situation, in which the Indian delegation merely performed its colonial duty of voting at the will of another country—at the will of Great Britain. The time is not far remote, however, when other and happier days will come for India!

Take another question. By an overwhelming majority of votes, including those of Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union, the Political Committee for Bulgaria approved the pro-

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posal of the Council of Foreign Ministers to preserve the present Bulgaro-Greek frontier, which conforms to the interests of a stable peace in Europe. At the plenary session of the Conference, however, the British delegate, contrary to his voting in the Committee and still earlier in the Council of Foreign Ministers, headed a majority of delegations which possessed twelve votes, and abstained from voting when the proposal on preserving the present Bulgaro-Greek frontier intact was put to the vote.

As a result of this, the Conference did not take any decision on this subject. This means that, by the votes of mainly small States, Britain achieved a decision at the plenary session which by no means conforms to the interests of a stable peace, but can only serve as an impetus for adventures and aggression.

The question arises whether such voting is in the national interests of Ethiopia, Belgium, Brazil, India, Holland, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, China or, lastly, even Greece herself, which, together with Britain, abstained from voting on this question? Is not this combination of delegations a kind of playing with votes which, however, no honest democrat and no unbiased person in general can fail to regard as a gross political blunder, prejudicing the cause of a stable peace, and advantageous only to those who sow uneasiness and new aggression?

Playing With Votes

This voting combination cast doubt on the whole practice of voting at this Conference. And yet, beyond any doubt, the Council of Foreign Ministers will again approve its previous decision on the stability of the Bulgaro-Greek frontier, which will constitute a condemnation of the artificial combination of the 12 votes of those who abstained at the plenary session of the Conference.

The political playing with votes in the matter of the Bulgaro-Greek frontier will by no means meet the approval of public opinion in democratic countries. The miscalculation made in this political game is obvious. That is why we confidently tell the Bulgarians—our friends: "Bulgarians, do not worry, your frontier will remain unshakable."

To explain the reason for the unsatisfactory progress of the Conference, one should recall how many problems were discussed here. We who formed the minority felt it our duty to explain our views on all important problems, we made many attempts to appeal to the sense of impartiality, to the interests of co-operation.

We believe that a study of these pronouncements will be useful, since one should think not only of the delegates of the Conference, but also of those millions of people who watch attentively everything going on in the Luxembourg Palace. Yet at the Conference even the most weighty arguments proved little effective. The method of persuasion was neither successful nor popular where, say, the British or American delegation disagreed with one or other opinion.

Regardless of whether a certain proposal was right or wrong, it secured a majority for the Anglo-American bloc if it suited a definite group. For some reason, things at the Conference were arranged in such a way that, contrary to the order of the alphabet, the delegate of the United States was the first to vote, and from the very outset he definitely set the tune in regard to all the proposals made by the minority. This certainly facilitated the position of a definite group, but it failed to enhance the prestige of the Conference decisions.

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Make a check-up, and you will see that throughout the Conference the Soviet delegation did not renounce a single one of its views expressed before the Conference and reflected in the agreed decisions of the Council of Foreign Ministers. I cannot, however, pass over in silence the fact that the three other members of the Foreign Ministers' Council twice renounced their views expressed in the agreed decisions of the Council of Foreign Ministers.

It is known that, as regards procedure, the British, American and French delegations renounced here the stand they took in the Council of Foreign Ministers. It seemed more convenient to them to rely, not only on a majority of two-thirds of the votes, as is usual at international conferences, but on a simple majority—evidently so that the dominating group at the Conference should feel perfectly comfortable and certain at all and every voting.

It is also well known that on the subject of the statute of Trieste those three delegations also renounced their view agreed upon by the four Ministers in the Council of Foreign Ministers, and prevailed on the Conference to take decisions which contradict the democratic principles of the statute of Trieste recognised by the Council of Ministers. These examples also prove that not much concern was displayed about the prestige of the Conference.

This, gentlemen, is how matters stand in regard to the results of the work of the Conference. As a consequence the value of many of the recommendations passed by the Conference was impaired. The entire progress of the Conference's work, and the wrong voting procedure accepted by it, resulted in a decline in the prestige of the recommendations adopted by the Conference.

As a result of all this, we are bound to give serious attention to the principles of post-war co-operation between big and small States in order to prevent any possible unfavourable consequences of the violation of universally recognised democratic principles in this field.

The Problem of Finland

Apart from those good things accomplished by the Conference which I mentioned at the beginning, it has given quite a few examples of how co-operation between big and small States should not be arranged if we are really imbued with the spirit of democratic co-operation among the nations. In this connection I want to dwell on the problem of Finland, and on the policy of the Great Powers in regard to small countries.

The policy of the Soviet Union in regard to Finland is clear. It is determined by the democratic principles on which the U.S.S.R. bases its attitude towards small countries.

The Soviet Union has always sought to establish friendly relations with its small neighbour, Finland. It proved impossible to achieve this before the war, since Finland was ruled by a clique of reactionaries, including reactionary "Socialists" of the type of Tanner, now convicted by a Finnish court together with other war criminals. This clique involved Finland in alliance with Hitler Germany and then in war against the U.S.S.R., in which Finland played a disgraceful part in besieging glorious Soviet Leningrad.

Yet, despite this, when the Soviet Army routed the German and Finnish troops which were besieging Leningrad, and victoriously advanced northward from Leningrad, the Soviet Union agreed to generous Armistice terms, and on its own initiative refused to send Soviet troops to the territory of Finland. This made the Armistice terms considerably easier for Finland, which, unlike all the

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other satellites of Germany, was spared great expenditure for the maintenance of occupation troops.

After the end of the war, Finland freely chose a democratic path of development, and since then has been treading her own road, observing a policy of good-neighbourly relations with the U.S.S.R. In this case the Soviet Union, as on all other occasions, never interfered in Finland's domestic affairs and exerted no pressure on those affairs; and whenever Finland applied to the U.S.S.R., the latter rendered her the necessary practical assistance and facilitated as far as possible the execution of the Armistice terms. On her part, Finland honestly discharged her reparation and other obligations to the U.S.S.R.

The draft peace treaty with Finland provides only for those absolutely indispensable obligations which had already earlier been provided by the Armistice terms, and the generosity of which cannot be denied by any impartial person. Certainly a departure from these conditions cannot be allowed.

As to the policy of the other Great Powers in regard to Finland, the situation here is somewhat different. Senator Vandenberg's speech today confirms this and leaves a very unfavourable impression as regards the consistency and sincerity of the views which he expressed. The American delegate assumed the pose of Finland's well wisher, and made a statement which means nothing more nor less than thwarting the Armistice terms signed by Finland on the one hand, and by the Soviet Union and Great Britain on the other.

Two years have elapsed since these Armistice terms were signed, but never in all this time did the United States declare its disagreement with those terms. It is only today that Senator Vandenberg, displaying courage of a special kind, came forward on behalf of the United States of America against the basic terms of the Armistice with Finland.

The American delegate plunged here into a policy of open wooing of a small country, pretending that this wooimg means concern about Finland's interests. Yet such methods in regard to small countries have long been known and cannot appear new to any one of us. It is interesting that even somewhat earlier the British delegation also displayed peculiar attention to Finland. It was only in regard to Finland that Great Britain agreed to the Soviet Union's proposal not to take and not to liquidate the assets of that country abroad, although both Great Britain and the United States demand the taking away and liquidation of foreign assets of Hungary and Bulgaria and Rumania, despite all objections and requests on the part of the Soviet delegation that they refrain from these excessive claims against small countries.

Thus the United States and Great Britain adopted a certain policy in regard to some of the small States and a different policy in regard to Finland. And these attempts to display peculiar goodwill in regard to Finland are made in such a way as to lead to opposing Finland to her neighbour, the Soviet Union.

In the past, too, we had occasion to face such methods in the foreign policies of certain States. Before the war we witnessed numerous facts of this kind, especially in regard to small countries which are neighbours of the Soviet Union.

It is well-known what consequences followed from the wooing of Finnish reactionary circles by great Powers. At that time the Finnish reactionaries imagined that everything was permitted to them. The end of it was that Finland concluded an alliance with Hitler and plunged into adventurist war against the Soviet Union. Having become a plaything in the hands of German fascism, Finland made

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tremendous sacrifices in the last two wars against the U.S.S.R.

Certain reactionaries are fond of this political game with small countries, particularly if this satisfies their desire to cause prejudice against the Soviet Union. We believe, however, that the Finns have drunk a bitter cup and have already learned to distinguish true friends from poor advisers who pursue their own narrow aims.

One thing is clear: true co-operation between big and small countries can only rest on an honest and democratic foundation. A game of friendship can now have no success with nations which have experienced grave trials. On the other hand, however, there should be no doubt that true friendship between nations is a great force of our times.

Offensive Against Co-operation

At present an offensive is in progress against the main principles of co-operation among big and small States embodied in the Charter of the United Nations Organisation. This offensive is being waged under the slogan of struggle against the so-called right of veto belonging to the Great Powers in the Security Council. In reality, however, this is an expression of the pressure of the reactionary circles of certain Great Powers, who have imagined themselves masters of the world, who seek to impose their will on all nations and who, in the attempt to clear away all obstacles from this road, intend to abolish the principles of co-operation of nations established by the United Nations Organisation.

It now becomes ever clearer how they wish to achieve this. Recently Australia and Cuba placed on the agenda of the General Assembly of the United Nations proposals aimed at destroying the foundation on which the United Nations Organisation rests. They show special concern, if you please, in abolishing the principle of unanimity of the five Great Powers in deciding basic questions of the peace and security of nations, as required by the Charter of the United Nations Organisation. Clearly what matters here is not Australia or Cuba, who are unable to do anything independently in such matters.

An attack against the principle of unity of action of the Great Powers has now been launched by M. Spaak, too, who has forgotten that this is an especially inappropriate course for the President of the General Assembly, who ought to uphold the Charter of the United Nations Organisation instead of destroying it.

We know that some politicians do not find it so very difficult to adjust themselves to reactionary circles. But if one bears in mind that the future does not belong to these forces, one should not doubt that the principles of the democratic co-operation of nations, which unite big and small countries in the interests of universal peace and security—that these principles will triumph over all the machinations of the reactionaries. The Soviet Union is true to its programme of struggle for stable peace and security, and defends the principles of honest co-operation among nations.

We have heard the calm and firm voice of the great Stalin, which resounded throughout the world. The head of the Soviet Government, Stalin, said that he unconditionally believes in the possibility of friendly and lasting co-operation between the Soviet Union and the Western democracies, despite the existence of ideological differences, and also believes in "friendly competition" between the two systems. Such is the general line of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union.

This policy is not new. As early as November 6, 1944, when the Allies

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were waging a struggle against Hitler Germany and imperialist Japan, the great leader of the land of Soviets, Stalin, spoke of the creation of the United Nations Organisation: "Can we expect the actions of this world organisation to be sufficiently effective? They will be effective if the Great Powers which have borne the brunt of the war against Hitler Germany continue to act in a spirit of unanimity and accord. They will not be effective if this essential condition is violated."

At that time these statements seemed perfectly indisputable to all of us. In not a single democratic country was any objection raised to this statement of the head of the Soviet Government.

But the war has gone. The Soviet Army has performed its epoch-making feat. New sentiments have appeared. Attempts are now being made to effect a turn. They even seek sometimes to exploit the Peace Conference in the interests of a definite dominant group, and they evidently wish to adjust even the United Nations Organisation to such purposes.

We shall not render any assistance in these attempts. The Soviet Union will resist every attempt to deflect the United Nations Organisation from its main path; from the road of arranging the co-operation of the peace-loving countries in conformity with the aims of the general security of the nations.

The Soviet Union is for the co-operation of all nations, for co-operation between big and small powers based on the principles of equality and recognition of the legitimate interests of big and small States. These are the principles of democratic co-operation of nations, and we shall to the end remain true to the defence of these principles. And we know that this is the only correct policy.

Taking the floor again at the concluding session of the Conference in support of the resolutions expressing gratitude to the French Government, M. Bidault, the General Secretariat and the servicing personnel of the Conference, V. M. Molotov said:—

Mr. President, Messrs. Delegates,

The Soviet delegation supports with great satisfaction the resolutions which have just now been read expressing gratitude to M. Bidault and the Government of France for their exceptional hospitality, and gratitude to the Secretary-General and all members of the staff of the present Conference, who have rendered tremendous help to us during the intensive work that has been going on here. The Soviet delegation would only desire to express this great and sincere gratitude as eloquently and convincingly as possible.

We have heard a speech devoted to the importance of the work of the present Conference. Each one of us cannot fail to think of this at the present moment. And not only are those who are present here pondering today over the results of the work of the present Conference, but also those who are outside these walls and of whom there is a far greater number than of us sitting in this hall. In doing so they recall the grave war years, the crime of fascism, the hardships and trials of the struggle in those last years, when the desire of the nations for the establishment of a genuinely stable and durable peace and security of nations after the Second World War has increased so greatly.

The Soviet delegation represents a country which has made her contribution to the cause of our common victory. We know that this contribution of the U.S.S.R. has met with the widest recognition among all the Allied and associated nations as a great deed in securing the rout of the enemy and the liberation of the nations from the fascism that sprang up after the First World War.

Now, when the Allies are busy with establishing the peace and security of

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LABOUR MONTHLY GUARANTEE FUND

Amount received in October, 1946 : £55 : 15 : 3

TRINIDAD—BRITISH WEST INDIES

A reader in Trinidad, writing to us congratulating the L.M. on its 25th Anniversary, deplores the fact that no message of greeting from B.W.I. was included in the Anniversary Number. This is his message that he sends "on behalf of the labour movement in the West Indies and in Trinidad particularly":—

"This magazine, by presenting Marxist analyses of the international situation, is performing a great service to world labour, including colonial labour.

"It was late last year that I was introduced to LABOUR MONTHLY, which was then banned; but the issues I received in those few months have completely cleared my head of all the filth put in by the local newspapers. Like a powerful ray of light, LABOUR MONTHLY has penetrated the cloak of intellectual darkness in which these islands are shrouded; for which we must be grateful."

We, too, would like to express our thanks to this reader and to all of you who have sent us both messages of support and financial help: this has been more than an encouragement—it has been our life-line.

If our plans for a "bigger and better L.M." are to come to fruition in the New Year, we need this support now more than ever and we feel sure you will not let us down.

A MINIMUM OF £100 NEEDED EACH MONTH

	£	s.	d.
C. H. B. Locke ...		10	0
T. Flood		2	6
O. Greene	3	0	0
D. Wares		2	6
Mr.& Mrs.Humphreys		3	0
D. H. Strathern and Friends		5	0
S. Morrissy		10	0
H. G. K.		6	6
J. M. Roberts ...		3	0
D. Stenton		13	0
H. Haycock		13	0
J. Hinchcliffe... ...		2	6
M. Timmins ...		13	0
W. G. King		13	0
C. Nettleton		13	0
M. Fulcher		3	0
A. Mossop ...		3	0
C. E. Prater		3	6
Anon.		1	6
W. H. Jones		3	0
G. S. Robertson ...		13	0
D. Wright		2	6
H. E. Reiss		3	0
S. Mill		10	0
M. R. Turner ...		3	0
P. H. M.		14	0
N. Brown		3	0
L. H. Mills		2	0
W. J. Jones		13	0
G. J. Orwin		10	0
E. D. McCallum ...		2	6
M. Greenstone ...		13	0
G. J. Morey	1	0	0
A. L. Bing		13	0
L. S. Bennett ...		13	0
A. Crosby		3	0
F. Wedlake		5	0
Smoke		10	0
I. D. McIntyre ...		3	6
J. Davenport ...	3	0	0
P. Andrews	1	0	0
W. G. Maddison ...	1	0	0
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